

ENDYMION

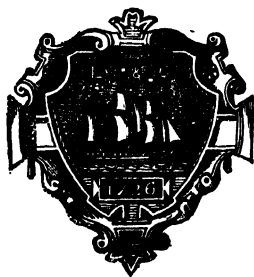
BY THE AUTHOR OF

“LOTHAIR”

“Quicquid agunt homines”

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ENDYMION.



CHAPTER I.

WITH the assembling of parliament in November recommenced the sittings of the Union Society, of which Endymion had for some time been a member, and of whose meetings he was a constant and critical, though silent, attendant. There was a debate one night on the government of dependencies, which, although all reference to existing political circumstances was rigidly prohibited, no doubt had its origin in the critical state of one of our most important colonies, then much embarrassing the metropolis. The subject was one which Endymion had considered, and on which he had arrived at certain conclusions. The meeting was fully attended,

and the debate had been conducted with a gravity becoming the theme. Endymion was sitting on a back bench, and with no companion near him with whom he was acquainted, when he rose and solicited the attention of the president. Another and a well-known speaker had also risen, and been called, but there was a cry of 'new member,' a courteous cry, borrowed from the House of Commons, and Endymion for the first time heard his own voice in public. He has since admitted, though he has been through many trying scenes, that it was the most nervous moment of his life. 'After Calais,' as a wise wit said, 'nothing surprises ;' and the first time a man speaks in public, even if only at a debating society, is also the unequalled incident in its way. The indulgence of the audience supported him while the mist cleared from his vision, and his palpitating heart subsided into comparative tranquillity. After a few pardonable incoherencies, he was launched into his subject, and spoke with the thoughtful fluency which knowledge alone can sustain. For knowledge is the foundation of eloquence.

‘What a good-looking young fellow!’ whispered Mr. Bertie Tremaine to his brother Mr. Tremaine Bertie. The Bertie Tremaines were the two greatest swells of the Union, and had a party of their own. ‘And he speaks well.’

‘Who is he?’ inquired Mr. Tremaine Bertie of their other neighbour.

‘He is a clerk in the Treasury, I believe, or something of that sort,’ was the reply.

‘I never saw such a good-looking young fellow,’ said Mr. Bertie Tremaine. ‘He is worth getting hold of. I shall ask to be introduced to him when we break up.’

Accordingly, Mr. Bertie Tremaine, who was always playing at politics, and who, being two-and-twenty, was discontented he was not Chancellor of the Exchequer like Mr. Pitt, whispered to a gentleman who sate behind him, and was, in short, the whip of his section, and signified, as a minister of state would, that an introduction to Mr. Ferrars should be arranged.

So when the meeting broke up, of which Mr. Ferrars’ maiden speech was quite the

event, and while he was contemplating, not without some fair self-complacency, walking home with Trenchard, Endymion found himself encompassed by a group of bowing forms and smiling countenances, and, almost before he was aware of it, had made the acquaintance of the great Mr. Bertie Tremaine, and received not only the congratulations of that gentleman, but an invitation to dine with him on the morrow ; ‘ quite *sans façon*.’

Mr. Bertie Tremaine, who had early succeeded to the family estate, lived in Grosvenor Street, and in becoming style. His house was furnished with luxury and some taste. The host received his guests in a library, well stored with political history and political science, and adorned with the busts of celebrated statesmen and of profound political sages. Bentham was the philosopher then affected by young gentlemen of ambition, and who wished to have credit for profundity and hard heads. Mr. Bertie Tremaine had been the proprietor of a close borough, which for several generations had returned his family to parliament, the faithful supporters of Pitt, and Perceval, and Liverpool, and he had contem-

plated following the same line, though with larger and higher objects than his ancestors. Being a man of considerable and versatile ability, and of ample fortune, with the hereditary opportunity which he possessed, he had a right to aspire, and, as his vanity more than equalled his talents, his estimate of his own career was not mean. Unfortunately, before he left Harrow, he was deprived of his borough, and this catastrophe eventually occasioned a considerable change in the views and conduct of Mr. Bertie Tremaine. In the confusion of parties and political thought which followed the Reform Act of Lord Grey, an attempt to govern the country by the assertion of abstract principles, and which it was now beginning to be the fashion to call Liberalism, seemed the only opening to public life ; and Mr. Bertie Tremaine, who piqued himself on recognising the spirit of the age, adopted Liberal opinions with that youthful fervour which is sometimes called enthusiasm, but which is a heat of imagination subsequently discovered to be inconsistent with the experience of actual life. At Cambridge Mr. Bertie Tremaine was at

first the solitary pupil of Bentham, whose principles he was prepared to carry to their extreme consequences, but being a man of energy and in possession of a good estate, he soon found followers, for the sympathies of youth are quick, and, even with an original bias, it is essentially mimetic. When Mr. Bertie Tremaine left the university he found in the miscellaneous elements of the London Union many of his former companions of school and college, and from them, and the new world to which he was introduced, it delighted him to form parties and construct imaginary cabinets. His brother Augustus, who was his junior only by a year, and was destined to be a diplomatist, was an efficient assistant in these enterprises, and was one of the guests who greeted Endymion when he arrived next day in Grosvenor Street according to his engagement. The other three were Hortensius, the whip of the party, and Mr. Trenchard.

The dinner was refined, for Mr. Bertie Tremaine combined the Sybarite with the Utilitarian sage, and it secretly delighted him

to astonish or embarrass an austere brother republican by the splendour of his family plate or the polished appointments of his household. To-day the individual to be influenced was Endymion, and the host, acting up to his ideal of a first minister, addressed questions to his companions on the subjects which were peculiarly their own, and, after eliciting their remarks, continued or completed the treatment of the theme with adequate ability, though in a manner authoritative, and, as Endymion thought, a little pompous. What amused him most in this assemblage of youth was their earnest affectation of public life. The freedom of their comments on others was only equalled by their confidence in themselves. Endymion, who only spoke when he was appealed to, had casually remarked in answer to one of the observations which his host with elaborate politeness occasionally addressed to him, that he thought it was unpatriotic to take a certain course. Mr. Bertie Tremaine immediately drew up, and said, with a deep smile, 'that he comprehended philanthropy, but patriot-

ism he confessed he did not understand ;' and thereupon delivered himself of an address on the subject which might have been made in the Union, and which communicated to the astonished Endymion that patriotism was a false idea, and entirely repugnant to the principles of the new philosophy. As all present were more or less impregnated with these tenets, there was no controversy on the matter. Endymion remained discreetly silent, and Augustus—Mr. Bertie Tremaine's brother—who sate next to him, and whose manners were as sympathising as his brother's were autocratic, whispered in a wheedling tone that it was quite true, and that the idea of patriotism was entirely relinquished except by a few old-fashioned folks who clung to superstitious phrases. Hortensius, who seemed to be the only one of the company who presumed to meet Mr. Bertie Tremaine in conversation on equal terms, and who had already astonished Endymion by what that inexperienced youth deemed the extreme laxity of his views, both social and political, evinced, more than once, a disposition to

deviate into the lighter topics of feminine character, and even the fortunes of the hazard-table; but the host looked severe, and was evidently resolved that the conversation to-day should resemble the expression of his countenance. After dinner they returned to the library, and most of them smoked, but Mr. Bertie Tremain, inviting Endymion to seat himself by his side on a sofa at the farther end of the room, observed, 'I suppose you are looking to parliament?'

'Well, I do not know,' said the somewhat startled Endymion; 'I have not thought much about it, and I have not yet reached a parliamentary age.'

'A man cannot enter parliament too soon,' said Mr. Bertie Tremain; 'I hope to enter this session. There will be a certain vacancy on a petition, and I have arranged to have the seat.'

'Indeed!' said Endymion. 'My father was in parliament, and so was my grandfather, but I confess I do not very well see my way there.'

'You must connect yourself with a party,'

said Mr. Bertie Tremaine, 'and you will soon enter ; and being young, you should connect yourself with the party of the future. The country is wearied with the present men, who have no philosophical foundation, and are therefore perpetually puzzled and inconsistent, and the country will not stand the old men, as it is resolved against retrogression. The party of the future and of the speedy future has its head-quarters under this roof, and I should like to see you belong to it.'

'You are too kind,' murmured Endymion.

'Yes, I see in you the qualities adapted to public life, and which may be turned to great account. I must get you into parliament as soon as you are eligible,' continued Mr. Bertie Tremaine in a musing tone. 'This death of the King was very inopportune. If he had reigned a couple of years more, I saw my way to half a dozen seats, and I could have arranged with Lord Durham.'

'That was unfortunate,' said Endymion.

'What do you think of Hortensius ?' inquired Mr. Bertie Tremaine.

'I think him the most brilliant speaker I

know,' said Endymion. 'I never met him in private society before ; he talks well.'

'He wants conduct,' said Mr. Bertie Tremaine. 'He ought to be my Lord Chancellor, but there is a tone of levity about him which is unfortunate. Men destined to the highest places should beware of badinage.'

'I believe it is a dangerous weapon.'

'All lawyers are loose in their youth, but an insular country subject to fogs, and with a powerful middle class, requires grave statesmen. I attribute a great deal of the nonsense called Conservative Reaction to Peel's solemnity. The proper minister for England at this moment would be Pitt. Extreme youth gives hope to a country ; coupled with ceremonious manners, hope soon assumes the form of confidence.'

'Ah !' murmured Endymion.

'I had half a mind to ask Jawett to dinner to-day. His powers are unquestionable, but he is not a practical man. For instance, I think myself our colonial empire is a mistake, and that we should disembarrass ourselves of its burthen as rapidly as is consistent with

the dignity of the nation ; but were Jawett in the House of Commons to-morrow, nothing would satisfy him but a resolution for the total and immediate abolition of the empire, with a preamble denouncing the folly of our fathers in creating it. Jawett never spares anyone's self-love.'

'I know him very well,' said Endymion ; 'he is in my office. He is very uncompromising.'

'Yes,' said Mr. Bertie Tremaine musingly ; 'if I had to form a government, I could hardly offer him the cabinet.' Then speaking more rapidly, he added, 'The man you should attach yourself to is my brother Augustus—Mr. Tremaine Bertie. There is no man who understands foreign politics like Augustus, and he is a thorough man of the world.'

CHAPTER II.

WHEN parliament re-assembled in February, the Neuchatels quitted Hainault for their London residence in Portland Place. Mrs. Neuchatel was sadly troubled at leaving her country home, which, notwithstanding its distressing splendour, had still some forms of compensatory innocence in its flowers and sylvan glades. Adriana sighed when she called to mind the manifold and mortifying snares and pitfalls that awaited her, and had even framed a highly practical and sensible scheme which would permit her parents to settle in town and allow Myra and herself to remain permanently in the country; but Myra brushed away the project like a fly, and Adriana yielding, embraced her with tearful eyes.

The Neuchatel mansion in Portland Place

was one of the noblest in that comely quarter of the town, and replete with every charm and convenience that wealth and taste could provide. Myra, who, like her brother, had a tenacious memory, was interested in recalling as fully and as accurately as possible her previous experience of London life. She was then indeed only a child, but a child who was often admitted to brilliant circles, and had enjoyed opportunities of social observation which the very youthful seldom possess. Her retrospection was not as profitable as she could have desired, and she was astonished, after a severe analysis of the past, to find how entirely at that early age she appeared to have been engrossed with herself and with Endymion. Hill Street and Wimbledon, and all their various life, figured as shadowy scenes ; she could realise nothing very definite for her present guidance ; the past seemed a phantom of fine dresses, and bright equipages, and endless indulgence. All that had happened after their fall was distinct and full of meaning. It would seem that adversity had taught Myra to feel and think.

Forty years ago the great financiers had not that commanding, not to say predominant, position in society which they possess at present, but the Neuchatels were an exception to this general condition. They were a family which not only had the art of accumulating wealth, but of expending it with taste and generosity—an extremely rare combination. Their great riches, their political influence, their high integrity and their social accomplishments, combined to render their house not only splendid, but interesting and agreeable, and gave them a great hold upon the world. At first the fine ladies of their political party called on them as a homage of condescending gratitude for the public support which the Neuchatel family gave to their sons and husbands, but they soon discovered that this amiable descent from their Olympian heights on their part did not amount exactly to the sacrifice or service which they had contemplated. They found their hosts as refined as themselves, and much more magnificent, and in a very short time it was not merely the wives of ambassadors and ministers

of state that were found at the garden fêtes of Hainault, or the balls, and banquets, and concerts of Portland Place, but the fitful and capricious realm of fashion surrendered like a fair country conquered as it were by surprise. To visit the Neuchatels became the mode ; all solicited to be their guests, and some solicited in vain.

Although it was only February, the world began to move, and some of the ministers' wives who were socially strong enough to venture on such a step, received their friends. Mr. Neuchatel particularly liked this form of society. 'I cannot manage balls,' he used to say, 'but I like a ministerial reception. There is some chance of sensible conversation and doing a little business. I like talking with ambassadors after dinner. Besides, in this country you meet the leaders of the opposition, because, as they are not invited by the minister, but by his wife, anybody can come without committing himself.'

Myra, faithful to her original resolution, not to enter society while she was in mourning, declined all the solicitations of her friends

to accompany them to these assemblies. Mrs. Neuchatel always wished Myra should be her substitute, and it was only at Myra's instance that Adriana accompanied her parents. In the meantime, Myra saw much of Endymion. He was always a welcome guest by the family, and could call upon his sister at all the odds and ends of time that were at his command, and chat with her at pleasant ease in her pretty room. Sometimes they walked out together, and sometimes they went together to see some exhibition that everybody went to see. Adriana became almost as intimate with Endymion as his sister, and altogether the Neuchatel family became by degrees to him as a kind of home. Talking with Endymion, Myra heard a good deal of Colonel Albert, for he was her brother's hero—but she rarely saw that gentleman. She was aware from her brother, and from some occasional words of Mr. Neuchatel, that the great banker still saw Colonel Albert and not unfrequently; but the change of residence from Hainault to London made a difference in their mode of communication. Business was transacted in Bishopsgate

Street, and no longer combined with a pleasant ride to an Essex forest. More than once Colonel Albert had dined in Portland Place, but at irregular and miscellaneous parties. Myra observed that he was never asked to meet the grand personages who attended the celebrated banquets of Mr. Neuchatel. And why not? His manners were distinguished, and his whole bearing that of one accustomed to consideration. The irrepressible curiosity of woman impelled her once to feel her way on the subject with Mr. Neuchatel, but with the utmost dexterity and delicacy.

‘No,’ said Mr. Neuchatel with a laughing eye, and who saw through everybody’s purpose, though his own manner was one of simplicity amounting almost to innocence, ‘I did not say Colonel Albert was going to dine here on Wednesday; I have asked him to dine here on Sunday. On Wednesday I am going to have the premier and some of his colleagues. I must insist upon Miss Ferrars dining at table. You will meet Lord Roehampton; all the ladies admire him and he admires all the ladies. It will not do to ask Colonel Albert

to meet such a party, though perhaps,' added Mr. Neuchatel with a merry smile, 'some day they may be asked to meet Colonel Albert. Who knows, Miss Ferrars? The wheel of Fortune turns round very strangely.'

'And who then is Colonel Albert?' asked Myra with decision.

'Colonel Albert is Colonel Albert, and nobody else so far as I know,' replied Mr. Neuchatel; 'he has brought a letter of credit on my house in that name, and I am happy to honour his drafts to the amount in question, and as he is a foreigner, I think it is but kind and courteous occasionally to ask him to dinner.'

Miss Ferrars did not pursue the inquiry, for she was sufficiently acquainted with Mr. Neuchatel to feel that he did not intend to gratify her curiosity.

The banquet of the Neuchatels to the premier, and some of the principal ambassadors and their wives, and to those of the premier's colleagues who were fashionable enough to be asked, and to some of the dukes and duchesses and other ethereal beings who supported the

ministry, was the first event of the season. The table blazed with rare flowers and rarer porcelain and precious candelabra of sculptured beauty glittering with light ; the gold plate was less remarkable than the delicate ware that had been alike moulded and adorned for a Du Barri or a Marie Antoinette, and which now found a permanent and peaceful home in the proverbial land of purity and order ; and amid the stars and ribbons, not the least remarkable feature of the whole was Mr. Neuchatel himself, seated at the centre of his table, alike free from ostentation or over-deference, talking to the great ladies on each side of him as if he had nothing to do in life but whisper in gentle ears, and partaking of his own dainties as if he were eating bread and cheese at a country inn.

Perhaps Mrs. Neuchatel might have afforded a companion picture. Partly in deference to their host, and partly because this evening the first dance of the season was to be given, the great ladies in general wore their diamonds, and Myra was amused as she watched their dazzling tiaras and flashing rivières, while

not a single ornament adorned the graceful presence of their hostess, who was more content to be brilliant only by her conversation. As Mr. Neuchatel had only a few days before presented his wife with another diamond necklace, he might be excused were he slightly annoyed. Nothing of the sort; he only shrugged his shoulders, and said to his nephew, 'Your aunt must feel that I give her diamonds from love and not from vanity, as she never lets me have the pleasure of seeing them.' The sole ornament of Adriana was an orchid, which had arrived that morning from Hainault, and she had presented its fellow to Myra.

There was one lady who much attracted the attention of Myra, interested in all she observed. This lady was evidently a person of importance, for she sate between an ambassador and a knight of the garter, and they vied in homage to her. They watched her every word, and seemed delighted with all she said. Without being strictly beautiful, there was an expression of sweet animation in her physiognomy which was highly attractive: her eye

was full of summer lightning, and there was an arch dimple in her smile, which seemed to irradiate her whole countenance. She was quite a young woman, hardly older than Myra. What most distinguished her was the harmony of her whole person ; her graceful figure, her fair and finely moulded shoulders, her pretty teeth and her small extremities, seemed to blend with and become the soft vivacity of her winning glance.

‘Lady Montfort looks well to-night,’ said the neighbour of Myra.

‘And is that Lady Montfort ? Do you know, I never saw her before.’

‘Yes ; that is the famous Berengaria, the Queen of Society and the genius of Whiggism.’

In the evening, a great lady, who was held to have the finest voice in society, favoured them with a splendid specimen of her commanding skill, and then Adriana was induced to gratify her friends with a song, ‘only one song,’ and that only on condition that Myra should accompany her. Miss Neuchatel had a sweet and tender voice, and it had been finely cultivated ; she would have been more

than charming if she had only taken interest in anything she herself did, or believed for a moment that she could interest others. When she ceased, a gentleman approached the instrument and addressed her in terms of sympathy and deferential praise. Myra recognised the knight of the garter who had sat next to Lady Montfort. He was somewhat advanced in middle life, tall and of a stately presence, with a voice more musical even than the tones which had recently enchanted everyone. His countenance was impressive, a truly Olympian brow, but the lower part of the face indicated not feebleness, but flexibility, and his mouth was somewhat sensuous. His manner was at once winning; natural, and singularly unaffected, and seemed to sympathise entirely with those whom he addressed.

‘But I have never been at Hainault,’ said the gentleman, continuing a conversation, ‘and therefore could not hear the nightingales. I am content you have brought one of them to town.’

‘Nightingales disappear in June,’ said Miss Ferrars; ‘so our season will be short.’

‘And where do they travel to?’ asked the gentleman.

‘Ah! that is a mystery,’ said Myra. ‘You must ask Miss Neuchatel.’

‘But she will not tell me,’ said the gentleman, for in truth Miss Neuchatel, though he had frequently addressed her, had scarcely opened her lips.

‘Tell your secret, Adriana,’ said Miss Ferrars, trying to force her to converse.

‘Adriana!’ said the gentleman. ‘What a beautiful name! You look with that flower, Miss Neuchatel, like a bride of Venice.’

‘Nay,’ said Myra; ‘the bride of Venice was a stormy ocean.’

‘And have you a Venetian name?’ asked the gentleman.

There was a pause, and then Miss Neuchatel, with an effort, murmured, ‘She has a very pretty name. Her name is Myra.’

‘She seems to deserve it,’ said the gentleman.

‘So you like my daughter’s singing,’ said Mr. Neuchatel, coming up to them. ‘She does not much like singing in public, but she

is very good girl, and always gives me a song when I come home from business.'

'Fortunate man!' said the gentleman. 'I wish somebody would sing to me when I come home from business.'

'You should marry, my lord,' said Mr. Neuchatel, 'and get your wife to sing to you. Is it not so, Miss Ferrars? By the bye, I ought to introduce you to—Lord Roehampton.'

CHAPTER III.

THE Earl of Roehampton was the strongest member of the government, except, of course, the premier himself. He was the man from whose combined force and flexibility of character the country had confidence that in all their councils there would be no lack of courage, yet tempered with adroit discretion. Lord Roehampton, though an Englishman, was an Irish peer, and was resolved to remain so, for he fully appreciated the position, which united social distinction with the power of a seat in the House of Commons. He was a very ambitious, and, as it was thought, worldly man, deemed even by many to be unscrupulous, and yet he was romantic. A great favourite in society, and especially with the softer sex, somewhat late in life, he had married suddenly a beautiful woman, who was

without fortune, and not a member of the enchanted circle in which he flourished. The union had been successful, for Lord Roehampton was gifted with a sweet temper, and, though people said he had no heart, with a winning tenderness of disposition or at least of manner which at the same time charmed and soothed. He had been a widower for two years, and the world was of opinion that he ought to marry again, and form this time a becoming alliance. In addition to his many recommendations he had now the inestimable reputation, which no one had ever contemplated for him, of having been a good husband.

Berengaria, Countess of Montfort, was a great friend of Lord Roehampton. She was accustomed to describe herself as 'the last of his conquests,' and though Lord Roehampton read characters and purposes with a glance, and was too sagacious to be deceived by anyone, even by himself, his gratified taste, for he scarcely had vanity, cherished the bright illusion of which he was conscious, and he responded to Lady Montfort half sportively,

half seriously, with an air of flattered devotion. Lord Roehampton had inherited an ample estate, and he had generally been in office ; for he served his apprenticeship under Perceval and Liverpool, and changed his party just in time to become a member of the Cabinet of 1831. Yet with all these advantages, whether it were the habit of his life, which was ever profuse, or that neglect of his private interests which almost inevitably accompanies the absorbing duties of public life, his affairs were always somewhat confused, and Lady Montfort, who wished to place him on a pinnacle, had resolved that he should marry an heiress. After long observation and careful inquiry and prolonged reflection, the lady she had fixed upon was Miss Neuchatel ; and she it was who had made Lord Roehampton cross the room and address Adriana after her song.

‘ He is not young,’ reasoned Lady Montfort to herself, ‘ but his mind and manner are young, and that is everything. I am sure I meet youth every day who, compared with Lord Roehampton, could have no chance with

my sex—men who can neither feel, nor think, nor converse. And then he is famous, and powerful, and fashionable, and knows how to talk to women. And this must all tell with a banker's daughter, dying, of course, to be a *grande dame*. It will do. He may not be young, but he is irresistible. And the father will like it, for he told me in confidence, at dinner, that he wished Lord Roehampton to be prime minister ; and with this alliance he will be.'

The plot being devised by a fertile brain never wanting in expedients, its development was skilfully managed, and its accomplishment anticipated with confidence. It was remarkable with what dexterity the Neuchatel family and Lord Roehampton were brought together. Berengaria's lord and master was in the country, which he said he would not quit ; but this did not prevent her giving delightful little dinners and holding select assemblies on nights when there was no dreadful House of Commons, and Lord Roehampton could be present. On most occasions, and especially on these latter ones, Lady Montfort

could not endure existence without her dear Adriana. Mr. Neuchatel, who was a little in the plot, who at least smiled when Berengaria alluded to her enterprise, was not wanting in his contributions to its success. He hardly ever gave one of his famous banquets to which Lord Roehampton was not invited, and, strange to say, Lord Roehampton, who had the reputation of being somewhat difficult on this head, always accepted the invitations. The crowning social incident, however, was when Lord Roehampton opened his own house for the first time since his widowhood, and received the Neuchatels at a banquet not inferior to their own. This was a great triumph for Lady Montfort, who thought the end was at hand.

‘Life is short,’ she said to Lord Roehampton that evening. ‘Why not settle it to-night?’

‘Well,’ said Lord Roehampton, ‘you know I never like anything precipitate. Besides, why should the citadel surrender when I have hardly entered on my first parallel?’

‘ Ah! those are old-fashioned tactics,’ said Lady Montfort.

‘ Well, I suppose I am an old-fashioned man.’

‘ Be serious, now. I want it settled before Easter. I must go down to my lord ~~then~~, and even before ; and I should like to see this settled before we separate.’

‘ Why does not Montfort come up to town?’ said Lord Roehampton. ‘ He is wanted.’

‘ Well,’ said Lady Montfort, with half a sigh, ‘ it is no use talking about it. He will not come. Our society bores him, and he must be amused. I write to him every day, and sometimes twice a day, and pass my life in collecting things to interest him. I would never leave him for a moment, only I know then that he would get wearied of me ; and he thinks now—at least, he once said so—that ~~he~~ he has never had a dull moment in my company.’

‘ How can he find amusement in the country?’ said Lord Roehampton. ‘ There is

no sport now, and a man cannot always be reading French novels.'

'Well, I send amusing people down to him,' said Berengaria. 'It is difficult to arrange, for he does not like toadies, which is so unreasonable, for I know many toadies who are very pleasant. Treeby is with him now, and that is excellent, for Treeby contradicts him, and is scientific as well as fashionable, and gives him the last news of the sun as well as of White's. I want to get this great African traveller to go down to him; but one can hardly send a perfect stranger as a guest. I wanted Treeby to take him, but Treeby refused—men are so selfish. Treeby could have left him there, and the traveller might have remained a week, told all he had seen, and as much more as he liked. My lord cannot stand Treeby more than two days, and Treeby cannot stand my lord for a longer period, and that is why they are such friends.'

'A sound basis of agreement,' said Lord Roehampton. 'I believe absence is often a great element of charm.'

'But, à nos moutons,' resumed Lady

Montfort. 'You see now why I am so anxious for a conclusion of our affair. I think it is ripe?'

'Why do you?' said Lord Roehampton.

'Well, she must be very much in love with you.'

'Has she told you so?'

'No; but she looks in love.'

'She never has told me so,' said Lord Roehampton.

'Have you told her?'

'Well, I have not,' said her companion. 'I like the family—all of them. I like Neuchatel particularly. I like his house and style of living. You always meet nice people there, and hear the last thing that has been said or done all over the world. It is a house where you are sure not to be dull.'

'You have described a perfect home,' said Lady Montfort, 'and it awaits you.'

'Well, I do not know,' said Lord Roehampton. 'Perhaps I am fastidious, perhaps I am content; to be noticed sometimes by a Lady Montfort should, I think, satisfy any man.'

‘ Well, that is gallant, but it is not business, my dear lord. You can count on my devotion even when you are married ; but I want to see you on a pinnaele, so that if anything happens there shall be no question who is to be the first man in this country.’

CHAPTER IV.

THE meeting of parliament caused also the return of Waldershare to England, and brought life and enjoyment to our friends in Warwick Street. Waldershare had not taken his seat in the autumn session. After the general election, he had gone abroad with Lord Beaumaris, the young nobleman who had taken them to the Derby, and they had seen and done many strange things. During all their peregrinations, however, Waldershare maintained a constant correspondence with Imogene, occasionally sending her a choice volume, which she was not only to read, but to prove her perusal of it by forwarding to him a criticism of its contents.

Endymion was too much pleased to meet Waldershare again, and told him of the kind of intimacy he had formed with Colonel Albert

and all about the baron. Waldershare was much interested in these details, and it was arranged that an opportunity should be taken to make the colonel and Waldershare acquainted.

This, however, was not an easy result to bring about, for Waldershare insisted on its not occurring formally, and as the colonel maintained the utmost reserve with the household, and Endymion had no room of reception, weeks passed over without Waldershare knowing more of Colonel Albert personally than sometimes occasionally seeing him mount his horse.

In the meantime life in Warwick Street, so far as the Rodney family were concerned, appeared to have re-assumed its pleasant, and what perhaps we are authorised in styling its normal condition. They went to the play two or three times a week, and there Waldershare or Lord Beaumaris, frequently both, always joined them; and then they came home to supper, and then they smoked; and sometimes there was a little singing, and sometimes a little whist. Occasionally there

was only conversation, that is to say, Waldershare held forth, dilating on some wondrous theme, full of historical anecdote, and dazzling paradox, and happy phrase. All listened with interest, even those who did not understand him. Much of his talk was addressed really to Beaumaris, whose mind he was forming, as well as that of Imogene. Beaumaris was an hereditary Whig, but had not personally committed himself, and the ambition of Waldershare was to transform him not only into a Tory, but one of the old rock, a real Jacobite. 'Is not the Tory party,' Waldershare would exclaim, 'a succession of heroic spirits, "beautiful and swift," ever in the van, and foremost of their age?—Hobbes and Bolingbroke, Hume and Adam Smith, Wyndham and Cobham, Pitt and Grenville, Canning and Huskisson?—Are not the principles of Toryism those popular rights which men like Shippen and Hynde Cotton flung in the face of an alien monarch and his mushroom aristocracy?—Place bills, triennial bills, opposition to standing armies, to peerage bills?—Are not the traditions of the

Tory party the noblest pedigree in the world? Are not its illustrations that glorious martyrology, that opens with the name of Falkland and closes with the name of Canning?’

‘I believe it is all true,’ whispered Lord Beaumaris to Sylvia, who had really never heard of any of these gentlemen before, but looked most sweet and sympathetic.

‘He is a wonderful man—Mr. Waldershare,’ said Mr. Vigo to Rodney, ‘but I fear not practical.’

One day, not very long after his return from his travels, Waldershare went to breakfast with his uncle, Mr. Sidney Wilton, now a cabinet minister, still unmarried, and living in Grosvenor Square. Notwithstanding the difference of their politics, an affectionate intimacy subsisted between them; indeed Waldershare was a favourite of his uncle, who enjoyed the freshness of his mind, and quite appreciated his brilliancy of thought and speech, his quaint reading and effervescent imagination.

‘And so you think we are in for life,

George,' said Mr. Wilton, taking a piece of toast. 'I do not.'

'Well, I go upon this,' said Waldershare. 'It is quite clear that Peel has nothing to offer the country, and the country will not rally round a negation. When he failed in '34, they said there had not been sufficient time for the reaction to work. Well, now, since then, it has had nearly three years, during which you fellows have done everything to outrage every prejudice of the constituency, and yet they have given you a majority.'

'Yes, that is all very well,' replied Mr. Wilton, 'but we are the Liberal shop, and we have no Liberal goods on hand; we are the party of movement and must perforce stand still. The fact is, all the great questions are settled. No one will burn his fingers with the Irish Church again, in this generation certainly not, probably in no other; you could not get ten men together in any part of the country to consider the corn laws; I must confess I regret it. I still retain my opinion that a moderate fixed duty would be

a wise arrangement, but I quite despair in my time of any such advance of opinion ; as for the ballot, it is hardly tolerated in debating societies. The present government, my dear George, will expire from inanition. I always told the cabinet they were going on too fast. They should have kept back municipal reform. It would have carried us on for five years. It was our only *pièce de résistance*.'

‘I look upon the House of Commons as a mere vestry,’ said Waldershare. ‘I believe it to be completely used up. Reform has dished it. There are no men, and naturally, because the constituencies elect themselves, and the constituencies are the most mediocre of the nation. The House of Commons now is like a spendthrift living on his capital. The business is done and the speeches are made by men formed in the old school. The influence of the House of Commons is mainly kept up by old social traditions. I believe if the eldest sons of peers now members would all accept the Chiltern hundreds, and the house thus cease to be fashionable, before a year was

past, it would be as odious and as contemptible as the Rump Parliament.'

'Well, you are now the eldest son of a peer,' said Sidney Wilton, smiling. 'Why do you not set an example, instead of spending your father's substance and your own in fighting a corrupt borough?'

'I am *vox clamantis*,' said Waldershare. 'I do not despair of its being done. But what I want is some big guns to do it. Let the eldest son of a Tory duke and the eldest son of a Whig duke do the thing on the same day, and give the reason why. If Saxmundham, for example, and Harlaxton would do it, the game would be up.'

'On the contrary,' said Mr. Wilton, 'Saxmundham, I can tell you, will be the new cabinet minister.'

'Degenerate land!' exclaimed Waldershare. 'Ah! in the eighteenth century there was always a cause to sustain the political genius of the country,—the cause of the rightful dynasty.'

'Well, thank God, we have got rid of all those troubles,' said Mr. Wilton.

‘Rid of them ! I do not know that. I saw a great deal of the Duke of Modena this year, and tried as well as I could to open his mind to the situation.’

‘You traitor !’ exclaimed Mr. Wilton. ‘If I were Secretary of State, I would order the butler to arrest you immediately, and send you to the Tower in a hack cab ; but as I am only a President of a Board and your uncle, you will escape.’

‘Well, I should think all sensible men,’ said Waldershare, ‘of all parties will agree, that before we try a republic, it would be better to give a chance to the rightful heir.’

‘Well, I am not a republican,’ said Mr. Wilton, ‘and I think Queen Victoria, particularly if she make a wise and happy marriage, need not much fear the Duke of Modena.’

‘He is our sovereign lord, all the same,’ said Waldershare. ‘I wish he were more aware of it himself. Instead of looking to a restoration to his throne, I found him always harping on the fear of French invasion. I could not make him understand that France was his natural ally, and that without her

help, Charlie was not likely to have his own again.'

'Well, as you admire pretenders, George, I wish you were in my shoes this morning, for I have got one of the most disagreeable interviews on hand which ever fell to my lot.'

'How so, my dear uncle?' said Waldershare, in a tone of sympathy, for he saw that the countenance of Mr. Wilton was disturbed.

'My unhappy ward,' said Mr. Wilton; 'you know, of course, something about him.'

'Well, I was at school and college,' said Waldershare, 'when it all happened. But I have just heard that you had relations with him.'

'The most intimate; and there is the bitterness. There existed between his mother Queen Agrippina and myself ties of entire friendship. In her last years and in her greatest adversity she appealed to me to be the guardian of her son. He inherited all her beauty and apparently all her sweetness of disposition. I took the greatest pains with him. He was at Eton, and did well there.

He was very popular ; I never was so deceived in a boy in my life. I thought him the most docile of human beings, and that I had gained over him an entire influence. I am sure it would have been exercised for his benefit. In short, I may say it now, I looked upon him as a son, and he certainly would have been my heir ; and yet all this time, from his seventeenth year, he was immersed in political intrigue, and carrying on plots against the sovereign of his country, even under my own roof.'

'How very interesting !' said Waldershare.

'It may be interesting to you ; I know what it cost me. The greatest anxiety and sorrow, and even nearly compromised my honour. Had I not a large-hearted chief and a true man of the world to deal with, I must have retired from the government.'

'How could he manage it?' said Waldershare.

'You have no conception of the devices and resources of the secret societies of Europe,' said Mr. Wilton. 'His drawing-master, his

fencing-master, his dancing-master, all his professors of languages, who delighted me by their testimony to his accomplishments and their praises of his quickness and assiduity, were active confederates in bringing about events which might have occasioned an European war. He left me avowedly to pay a visit in the country, and I even received letters from him with the postmark of the neighbouring town; letters all prepared beforehand. My first authentic information as to his movements was to learn, that he had headed an invading force, landed on the shores which he claimed as his own, defeated and a prisoner.'

'I remember it,' said Waldershare. 'I had just then gone to St. John's, and I remember reading it with the greatest excitement.'

'All this was bad enough,' said Mr. Wilton, 'but this is not my sorrow. I saved him from death, or at least a dreadful imprisonment. He was permitted to sail to America on his parole that he would never return to Europe, and I was required, and on his solemn appeal

I consented, to give my personal engagement that the compact should be sacred. Before two years had elapsed, supported all this time, too, by my bounty, there was an ~~at~~ tempt, almost successful, to assassinate the king, and my ward was discovered and seized in the capital. This time he was immured, and for life, in the strongest fortress of the country ; but secret societies laugh at governments, and though he endured a considerable imprisonment, the world has recently been astounded by hearing that he had escaped. Yes ; he is in London and has been here, though in studied ^{re-} security, for some little time. He has never appealed to me until within these few days, and now only on the ground that there were some family affairs which cannot be arranged without my approval. I had great doubts whether I should receive him. I feel I ought not to have done so. But I hesitated, and I know not what may be the truth about women, but of this I am quite sure, the man who hesitates is lost.

‘ How I should like to be present at the interview, my dear uncle ! ’ said Waldershare.

‘And I should not be sorry to have a witness,’ said Mr. Wilton, ‘but it is impossible. I am ashamed to say how unhinged I feel ; no person, and no memories, ought to exercise such an influence over one. To tell you the truth, I encouraged your pleasant gossip at breakfast by way of distraction at this moment, and now——’

At this moment, the groom of the chambers entered and announced ‘His royal highness, Prince Florestan.’

Mr. Wilton, who was too agitated to speak, waved his hand to Waldershare to retire, and his nephew vanished. As Waldershare was descending the staircase, he drew back on a landing-place to permit the prince to advance undisturbed. The prince apparently did not observe him, but when Waldershare caught the countenance of the visitor, he started.

CHAPTER V.

‘I KNOW, sir, you are prejudiced against me,’ said Prince Florestan, bowing before Mr. Wilton with a sort of haughty humility, ‘and therefore I the more appreciate your condescension in receiving me.’

‘I have no wish to refer to the past,’ said Mr. Wilton somewhat sternly. ‘You mentioned in your letter that my co-operation was necessary with reference to your private affairs, of which I once was a trustee, and under those circumstances I felt it my duty to accede to your request. I wish our communication to be limited to that business.’

‘It shall be so strictly,’ said the prince; ‘you may remember, sir, that at the unhappy period when we were deprived of our throne, the name of Queen Agrippina was inscribed on the great book of the state for a consider-

able sum, for which the credit of the state was pledged to her. It was strictly her private property, and had mainly accrued through the sale of the estates of her ancestors. This sum was confiscated, and several other amounts, which belonged to members of our house and to our friends. It was an act of pure rapine, so gross, that as time revolved, and the sense of justice gradually returned to the hearts of men, restitution was made in every instance except my own, though I have reason to believe that individual case was the strongest. My bankers, the house of Neuchatel, who have much interested themselves in this matter, and have considerable influence with the government that succeeded us, have brought things to this pass, that we have reason to believe our claim would be conceded, if some of the foreign governments, and especially the government of this country, would signify that the settlement would not be disagreeable to them.' And the prince ceased, and raising his eyes, which were downcast as he spoke, looked Mr. Wilton straight in the face.

‘Before such a proposal could even be considered by Her Majesty’s Government,’ said Mr. Wilton with a reddening cheek, ‘the intimation must be made to them by authority. If the minister of your country has such an intimation to make to ours, he should address himself to the proper quarter, to Lord Roehampton.’

‘I understand,’ said Prince Florestan ; ‘but governments, like individuals, sometimes shrink from formality. The government of my country will act on the intimation, but they do not care to make it an affair of despatches.’

‘There is only one way of transacting business,’ said Mr. Wilton, frigidly, and as if, so far as he was concerned, the interview was ended.

‘I have been advised on high authority,’ said Prince Florestan, speaking very slowly, ‘that if any member of the present cabinet will mention in conversation to the representative of my country here, that the act of justice would not be disagreeable to the British Government, the affair is finished.’

‘I doubt whether any one of my colleagues would be prepared to undertake a personal interference of that kind with a foreign government,’ said Mr. Wilton stiffly. ‘For my own part, I have had quite enough of such interpositions never to venture on them again.’

‘The expression of feeling desired would involve no sort of engagement,’ said the imperturbable prince.

‘That depends on the conscience of the individual who interferes. No man of honour would be justified in so interposing if he believed he was thus furnishing arms against the very government of which he solicited the favour.’

‘But why should he believe this?’ asked the prince with great calmness.

‘I think upon reflection,’ said Mr. Wilton, taking up at the same time an opened letter which was before him, as if he wished to resume the private business on which he had been previously engaged, ‘that your royal highness might find very adequate reasons for the belief.’

‘I would put this before you with great deference, sir,’ said the prince. ‘Take my own case ; is it not more likely that I should lead that life of refined retirement, which I really desire, were I in possession of the means to maintain such a position with becoming dignity, than if I were distressed, and harassed, and disgusted, every day, with sights and incidents which alike outrage my taste and self-respect ? It is not prosperity, according to common belief, that makes conspirators.’

‘You *were* in a position, and a refined position,’ rejoined Mr. Wilton sharply ; ‘you had means adequate to all that a gentlemen could desire, and might have been a person of great consideration, and you wantonly destroyed all this.’

‘It might be remembered that I was young.’

‘Yes, you were young, very young, and your folly was condoned. You might have begun life again, for to the world at least you were a man of honour. You had not deceived

the world, whatever you might have done to others.'

'If I presume to make another remark,' said the prince calmly, but pale, 'it is only, believe me, sir, from the profound respect I feel for you. Do not misunderstand these feelings, sir. They are not unbecoming the past. Now that my mother has departed, there is no one to whom I am attached except yourself. I have no feeling whatever towards any other human being. All my thought and all my sentiment are engrossed by my country. But pardon me, dear sir, for so let me call you, if I venture to say that, in your decision on my conduct, you have never taken into consideration the position which I inherited.'

'I do not follow you, sir.'

'You never will remember, that I am the child of destiny,' said Prince Florestan. 'That destiny will again place me on the throne of my fathers. That is as certain as I am now speaking to you. But destiny for its fulfilment ordains action. Its decrees are in-

exorable, but they are obscure, and the being whose career it directs is as a man travelling in a dark night ; he reaches his goal even without the aid of stars or moon.'

'I really do not understand what destiny means,' said Mr. Wilton. 'I understand what conduct means, and I recognise that it should be regulated by truth and honour. I think a man had better have nothing to do with destiny, particularly if it is to make him forfeit his parole.'

'Ah ! sir, I well know that on that head you entertain a great prejudice in my respect. Believe me it is not just. Even lawyers acknowledge that a contract which is impossible cannot be violated. My return from America was inevitable. The aspirations of a great people and of many communities required my presence in Europe. My return was the natural development of the irresistible principle of historical necessity.'

'Well, that principle is not recognised by Her Majesty's Ministers,' said Mr. Wilton, and both himself and the prince seemed to rise at the same time.

‘ I thank you, sir, for this interview,’ said his royal highness. ‘ You will not help me, but what I require will happen by some other means. It is necessary, and therefore it will occur.’

The prince remounted his horse, and rode off quickly till he reached the Strand, where obstacles to rapid progress commenced, and though impatient, it was some time before he reached Bishopsgate Street. He entered the spacious courtyard of a noble mansion, and, giving his horse to the groom, inquired for Mr. Neuchatel, to whom he was at once ushered,—seated in a fine apartment at a table covered with many papers.

‘ Well, my prince,’ said Mr. Neuchatel with a smiling eye, ‘ what brings such a great man into the City to-day ? Have you seen your great friend ?’ And then Prince Florestan gave Mr. Neuchatel a succinct but sufficient summary of his recent interview.

‘ Ah !’ said Mr. Neuchatel, ‘ so it is, so it is ; I dare say if you were received at St. James’, Mr. Sidney Wilton would not be so very particular ; but we must take things as

we find them. If our fine friends will not help us, you must try us poor business men in the City. We can manage things here sometimes which puzzle them at the West End. I saw you were disturbed when you came in. Put on a good countenance. Nobody should ever look anxious except those who have no anxiety. I dare say you would like to know how your account is. I will send for it. It is not so bad as you think. I put a thousand pounds to it in the hope that your fine friend would help us, but I shall not take it off again. My Louis is going to-night to Paris, and he shall call upon the ministers and see what can be done. In the meantime, good appetite, sir. I am going to luncheon, and there is a place for you. And I will show you my Gainsborough that I have just bought, from a family for whom it was painted. The face is divine, very like our Miss Ferrars. I am going to send the picture down to Hainault. I won't tell you what I gave for it, because perhaps you would tell my wife and she would be very angry. She would want the money for an infant school.

But I think she has schools enough. Now to lunch.'

On the afternoon of this day there was half-holiday at the office, and Endymion had engaged to accompany Waldershare on some expedition. They had been talking together in his room where Waldershare was finishing his careless toilette, which however was never finished, and they had just opened the house door and were sallying forth when Colonel Albert rode up. He gave a kind nod to Endymion, but did not speak, and the companions went on. 'By the bye, Ferrars,' said Waldershare, pressing his arm and bubbling with excitement, 'I have found out who your colonel is. It is a wondrous tale, and I will tell it all to you as we go on.'

CHAPTER VI.

ENDYMION had now passed three years of his life in London, and considering the hard circumstances under which he had commenced this career, he might on the whole look back to those years without dissatisfaction. Three years ago he was poor and friendless, utterly ignorant of the world, and with nothing to guide him but his own good sense. His slender salary had not yet been increased, but with the generosity and aid of his sister and the liberality of Mr. Vigo, he was easy in his circumstances. Through the Rodneys, he had become acquainted with a certain sort of miscellaneous life, a knowledge of which is highly valuable to a youth, but which is seldom attained without risk. Endymion, on the contrary, was always guarded from danger. Through his most unexpected connection with the Neuchatel family, he had

seen something of life in circles of refinement and high consideration, and had even caught glimpses of that great world of which he read so much and heard people talk more, the world of the Lord Roehampton and the Lady Montforts, and all those dazzling people whose sayings and doings form the taste, and supply the conversation, and leaven the existence of admiring or wondering millions.

None of these incidents, however, had induced any change in the scheme of his existence. Endymion was still content with his cleanly and airy garret; still dined at Joe's; was still sedulous at his office, and always popular with his fellow clerks. Seymour Hicks, indeed, who studied the 'Morning Post' with intentness, had discovered the name of Endymion in the elaborate lists of attendants on Mrs. Neuchatel's receptions, and had duly notified the important event to his colleagues; but Endymion was not severely bantered on the occasion, for, since the withdrawal of St. Barbe from the bureau, the stock of envy at Somerset House was sensibly diminished.

His lodging at the Rodneys', however, had brought Endymion something more valuable than an innocuous familiarity with their various and suggestive life. In the friendship of Waldershare he found a rich compensation for being withdrawn from his school and deprived of his university. The care of his father had made Endymion a good classical scholar, and he had realised a degree of culture which it delighted the brilliant and eccentric Waldershare to enrich and to complete. Waldershare guided his opinions, and directed his studies, and formed his taste. Alone at night in his garret, there was no solitude, for he had always some book or some periodical, English or foreign, with which Waldershare had supplied him, and which he assured Endymion it was absolutely necessary that he should read and master.

Nor was his acquaintance with Baron Sergius less valuable, or less fruitful of results. He too became interested in Endymion, and poured forth to him, apparently without reserve, all the treasures of his vast experience of men and things, especially with reference

to the conduct of external affairs. He initiated him in the cardinal principles of the policies of different nations ; he revealed to him the real character of the chief actors in the scene. ' The first requisite,' Baron Sergius would say, ' in the successful conduct of public affairs is a personal acquaintance with the statesmen engaged. It is possible that events may not depend now, so much as they did a century ago, on individual feeling, but, even if prompted by general principles, their application and management are always coloured by the idiosyncrasy of the chief actors. The great advantage which your Lord Roehampton, for example, has over all his colleagues in *la haute politique*, is that he was one of your plenipotentiaries at the Congress of Vienna. There he learned to gauge the men who govern the world. Do you think a man like that, called upon to deal with a Metternich or a Pozzo, has no advantage over an individual who never leaves his chair in Downing Street except to kill grouse ? Pah ! Metternich and Pozzo know very well that Lord Roehampton knows them, and they set

about affairs with him in a totally different spirit from that with which they circumvent some statesman who has issued from the barricades of Paris.'

Nor must it be forgotten that his debating society and the acquaintance which he had formed there, were highly beneficial to Endymion. Under the roof of Mr. Bertie Tremaine he enjoyed the opportunity of forming an acquaintance with a large body of young men of breeding, of high education, and full of ambition, that was a substitute for the society, becoming his youth and station, which he had lost by not going to the university.

With all these individuals, and with all their circles, Endymion was a favourite. No doubt his good looks, his mien—which was both cheerful and pensive—his graceful and quiet manners, all told in his favour, and gave him a good start, but further acquaintance always sustained the first impression. He was intelligent and well-informed, without any alarming originality, or too positive convictions. He listened not only with patience but with interest to all, and ever avoided con-

troversy. Here are some of the elements of a man's popularity.

What was his intellectual reach, and what his real character, it was difficult at this time to decide. He was still very young, only on the verge of his twentieth year ; and his character had no doubt been influenced, it might be suppressed, by the crushing misfortunes of his family. The influence of his sister was supreme over him. She had never reconciled herself to their fall. She had existed only on the solitary idea of regaining their position, and she had never omitted an occasion to impress upon him that he had a great mission, and that, aided by her devotion, he would fulfil it. What his own conviction on this subject was may be obscure. Perhaps he was organically of that cheerful and easy nature, which is content to enjoy the present, and not brood over the past. The future may throw light upon all these points ; at present it may be admitted that the three years of seemingly bitter and mortifying adversity have not been altogether wanting in beneficial elements in the formation of his character and the fashioning of his future life

CHAPTER VII.

LADY MONTFORT heard with great satisfaction from Mr. Neuchatel that Lord Roehampton was going to pay a visit to Hainault at Easter, and that he had asked himself. She playfully congratulated Mrs. Neuchatel on the subject, and spoke as if the affair was almost concluded. That lady, however, received the intimation with a serious, not to say distressed countenance. She said she should be grieved to lose Adriana under any circumstances; but if her marriage in time was a necessity, she trusted she might be united to some one who would not object to becoming a permanent inmate of their house. What she herself desired for her daughter was an union with some clergyman, and if possible, the rector of their own parish. But it was too charming a dream to realise. The rectory at Hainault

was almost in the Park, and was the prettiest house in the world, with the most lovely garden. She herself much preferred it to the great mansion—and so on.

Lady Montfort stared at her with impatient astonishment, and then said, ‘Your daughter, Mrs. Neuchatel, ought to make an alliance which would place her at the head of society.’

‘What a fearful destiny,’ said Mrs. Neuchatel, ‘for anyone, but overwhelming for one who must feel the whole time that she occupies a position not acquired by her personal

‘Adriana is pretty,’ said Lady Montfort. ‘I think her more than pretty ; she is highly accomplished and in every way pleasing. What can you mean, then, my dear madam, by supposing she would occupy a position not acquired by her personal qualities?’

Mrs. Neuchatel sighed and shook her head, and then said, ‘We need not have a controversy on this subject. I have no reason to believe there is any foundation for my fears. We all like and admire Lord Roehampton.

It is impossible not to admire and like him. So great a man, and yet so gentle and so kind, so unaffected—I would say, so unsophisticated; but he has never given the slightest intimation, either to me or her father, that he seriously admired Adriana, and I am sure if he had said anything to her she would have told us.'

'He is always here,' said Lady Montfort, 'and he is a man who used to go nowhere except for form. Besides, I know that he admires her, that he is in love with her, and I have not a doubt that he has invited himself to Hainault in order to declare his feelings to her.'

'How very dreadful!' exclaimed Mrs. Neuchatel. 'What are we to do?'

'To do!' said Lady Montfort; 'why, sympathise with his happiness, and complete it. You will have a son-in-law of whom you may well be proud, and Adriana a husband who, thoroughly knowing the world, and women, and himself, will be devoted to her; will be a guide and friend, a guide that will never lecture, and a friend who will always

charm, for there is no companion in the world like him, and I think I ought to know,' added Lady Montfort, 'for I always tell him I was the last of his conquests, and I shall ever be grateful to him for his having spared to me so much of his society.'

'Adriana on this matter will decide for herself,' said Mrs. Neuchatel in a serious tone, and with a certain degree of dignity. 'Neither Mr. Neuchatel, nor myself, have ever attempted to control her feelings in this respect.'

'Well, I am now about to see Adriana,' said Lady Montfort; 'I know she is at home. 'If I had not been obliged to go to Princetown, I would have asked you to let me pass Easter at Hainault myself.'

On this very afternoon, when Myra, who had been walking in Regent's Park with her brother, returned home, she found Adriana agitated, and really in tears.

'What is all this, dearest?' inquired her friend.

'I am too unhappy,' sobbed Adriana, and then she told Myra, that she had had a visit from Lady Montfort, and all that had

occurred in it. Lady Montfort had absolutely congratulated her on her approaching alliance with Lord Roehampton, and when she altogether disclaimed it, and expressed her complete astonishment at the supposition, Lady Montfort had told her she was not justified in giving Lord Roehampton so much encouragement and trifling with a man of his high character and position.

‘Fancy my giving encouragement to Lord Roehampton!’ exclaimed Adriana, and she threw her arms round the neck of the friend who was to console her.

‘I agree with Lady Montfort,’ said Myra, releasing herself with gentleness from her distressed friend. ‘It may have been unconsciously on your part, but I think you have encouraged Lord Roehampton. He is constantly conversing with you, and he is always here, where he never was before, and, as Lady Montfort says, why should he have asked himself to pass the Easter at Hainault if it were not for your society?’

‘He invited himself to Hainault, because he is so fond of papa,’ said Adriana.

‘So much the better, if he is to be your husband. That will be an additional element of domestic happiness.’

‘O! Myra, that you should say such things!’ exclaimed Adriana.

‘What things?’

‘That I should marry Lord Roehampton.’

‘I never said anything of the kind. Whom you should marry is a question you must decide for yourself. All that I said was, that if you marry Lord Roehampton, it is fortunate he is so much liked by Mr. Neuchatel.’

‘I shall not marry Lord Roehampton,’ said Adriana with some determination, ‘and if he has condescended to think of marrying me,’ she continued, ‘as Lady Montfort says, I think his motives are so obvious that if I felt for him any preference it would be immediately extinguished.’

‘Ah! now you are going to ride your hobby, my dear Adriana. On that subject we never can agree; were I an heiress, I should have as little objection to be married for my fortune as my face. Husbands, as I have

heard, do not care for the latter too long. Have more confidence in yourself, Adriana. If Lord Roehampton wishes to marry you, it is that he is pleased with you personally, that he appreciates your intelligence, your culture, your accomplishments, your sweet disposition, and your gentle nature. If in addition to these gifts you have wealth, and even great wealth, Lord Roehampton will not despise it, will not—for I wish to put it frankly—be uninfluenced by the circumstances, for Lord Roehampton is a wise man ; but he would not marry you if he did not believe that you would make for him a delightful companion in life, that you would adorn his circle and illustrate his name.'

'Ah! I see you are all in the plot against me,' said Adriana. 'I have no friend.'

'My dear Adriana, I think you are unreasonable ; I could say even unkind.'

'Oh ! pardon me, dear Myra,' said Adriana, 'but I really am so very unhappy.'

'About what? You are your own mistress in this matter. If you do not like to marry Lord Roehampton, nobody will attempt to

control you. What does it signify what Lady Montfort says ? or anybody else, except your own parents, who desire nothing but your happiness ? I should never have mentioned Lord Roehampton to you had you not introduced the subject yourself. And all that I meant to say was, what I repeat, that your creed that no one can wish to marry you except for your wealth is a morbid conviction, and must lead to unhappiness ; that I do not believe that Lord Roehampton is influenced in his overture, if he make one, by any unworthy motive, and that any woman whose heart is disengaged should not lightly repudiate such an advance from such a man, by which, at all events, she should feel honoured.'

'But my heart is engaged,' said Adriana in an almost solemn tone.

'Oh ! that is quite a different thing !' said Myra, turning pale.

'Yes !' said Adriana ; 'I am devoted to one whose name I cannot now mention, perhaps will never mention, but I am devoted to him. Yes !' she added with fire, 'I am not

altogether so weak a thing as the Lady Montforts and some other persons seem to think me—I can feel and decide for myself, and it shall never be said of me that I purchased love.'

CHAPTER VIII.

THERE was to be no great party at Hainault; Lord Roehampton particularly wished that there should be no fine folks asked, and especially no ambassadors. All that he wanted was to enjoy the fresh air, and to ramble in the forest, of which he had heard so much, with the young ladies.

‘And, by the bye, Miss Ferrars,’ said Mr. Neuchatel, ‘we must let what we were talking about the other day drop. Adriana has been with me quite excited about something. Lady Montfort said to her. I soothed her and assured her she should do exactly as she liked, and that neither I nor her mother had any other wishes on such a subject than her own. The fact is, I answered Lady Montfort originally only half in earnest. If the thing might have happened, I should have been

content—but it really never rested on my mind, because such matters must always originate with my daughter. Unless they come from her, with me they are mere fancies. But now I want you to help me in another matter, if not more grave, more business-like. My lord must be amused, although it is a family party. He likes his rubber: that we can manage. But there must be two or three persons that he is not accustomed to meet, and yet who will interest him. Now, do you know, Miss Ferrars, whom I think of asking?'

'Not I, my dear sir.'

'What do you think of the colonel?' said Mr. Neuchatel, looking in her face with a rather laughing eye.

'Well, he is very agreeable,' said Myra, 'and many would think interesting, and if Lord Roehampton does not know him, I think he would do very well.'

'Well, but Lord Roehampton knows all about him,' said Mr. Neuchatel.

'Well, that is an advantage,' said Myra.

'I do not know,' said Mr. Neuchatel. 'Life is a very curious thing, eh, Miss Ferrars?'

One cannot ask one person to meet another even in one's own home, without going through a sum of moral arithmetic.'

'Is it so?' said Myra.

'Well, Miss Ferrars,' said Mr. Neuchatel, 'I want your advice and I want your aid; but then it is a long story, at which I am rather a bad hand,' and Mr. Neuchatel hesitated. 'You know,' he said, suddenly resuming, 'you once asked me who Colonel Albert was.'

'But I do not ask you now,' said Myra, 'because I know.'

'Hah, hah!' exclaimed Mr. Neuchatel, much surprised.

'And what you want to know is,' continued Myra, 'whether Lord Roehampton would have any objection to meet Prince Florestan?'

'That is something; but that is comparatively easy. I think I can manage that. But when they meet—that is the point. But, in the first place, I should like very much to know how you became acquainted with the secret.'

'In a very natural way; my brother was my informant,' she replied.

‘Ah! now you see,’ continued Mr. Neuchatel, with a serious air, ‘a word from Lord Roehampton in the proper quarter might be of vast importance to the prince. He has a large inheritance, and he has been kept out of it unjustly. Our house has done what we could for him, for his mother, Queen Agrippina, was very kind to my father, and the house of Neuchatel never forgets its friends. But we want something else, we want the British Government to intimate that they will not disapprove of the restitution of the private fortune of the prince. I have felt my way with the premier; he is not favourable; he is prejudiced against the prince; and so is the cabinet generally; and yet all difficulties would vanish at a word from Lord Roehampton.’

‘Well, this is a good opportunity for you to speak to him,’ said Myra.

‘Hem!’ said Mr. Neuchatel, ‘I am not so sure about that. I like Lord Roehampton, and, between ourselves, I wish he were first minister. He understands the Continent, and would keep things quiet. But, do you know, Miss Ferrars, with all his playful, good-tempered

manner, as if he could not say a cross word or do an unkind act, he is a very severe man in business. Speak to him on business, and he is completely changed. His brows knit, he penetrates you with the terrible scrutiny of that deep-set eye ; he is more than stately, he is austere. I have been up to him with deputations—the Governor of the Bank, and all the first men in the City, half of them M.P.s, and they trembled before him like aspens. No, it will not do for me to speak to him, it will spoil his visit. I think the way will be this ; if he has no objection to meet the prince, we must watch whether the prince makes a favourable impression on him, and if that is the case, and Lord Roehampton likes him, what we must do next is this—you must speak to Lord Roehampton.'

‘ I ! ’

‘ Yes, Miss Ferrars, you. Lord Roehampton likes ladies. He is never austere to them, even if he refuses their requests, and sometimes he grants them. I thought first of Mrs. Neuchatel speaking to him, but my wife will never interfere in anything in which money is

concerned ; then I thought Adriana might express a hope when they were walking in the garden, but now that is all over ; and so you alone remain. I have great confidence in you,' added Mr. Neuchatel, 'I think you would do it very well. Besides, my lord rather likes you, for I have observed him often go and sit by you at parties, at our house.'

'Yes, he is very high-bred in that,' said Myra, gravely and rather sadly ; 'and the fact of my being a dependent, I have no doubt, influences him.'

'We are all dependents in this house,' said Mr. Neuchatel with his sweetest smile ; 'and I depend upon Miss Ferrars.'

Affairs on the whole went on in a promising manner. The weather was delightful, and Lord Roehampton came down to Hainault just in time for dinner, the day after their arrival, and in the highest spirits. He seemed to be enjoying a real holiday ; body and mind were in a like state of expansion ; he was enchanted with the domain ; he was delighted with the mansion, everything pleased and gratified him, and he pleased and gratified

everybody. The party consisted only of themselves, except one of the nephews, with whom indeed Lord Roehampton was already acquainted ; a lively youth, a little on the turf, not too much, and this suited Lord Roehampton, who was a statesman of the old aristocratic school, still bred horses, and sometimes ran one, and in the midst of an European crisis could spare an hour to Newmarket. Perhaps it was his only affectation.

Mrs. Neuchatel, by whom he was seated, had the happy gift of conversation ; but the party was of that delightful dimension, that it permitted talk to be general. Myra sate next to Lord Roehampton, and he often addressed her. He was the soul of the feast, and yet it is difficult to describe his conversation ; it was a medley of graceful whim, interspersed now and then with a very short anecdote of a very famous person, or some deeply interesting reminiscence of some critical event. Every now and then he appealed to Adriana, who sate opposite to him in the round table, and she trusted that her irrepressible smiles would not be interpreted into undue encouragement.

Lord Roehampton had no objection to meet Prince Florestan, provided there were no other strangers, and the incognito was observed. He rather welcomed the proposal, observing he liked to know public men personally ; so, you can judge of their calibre, which you never can do from books and newspapers, or the oral reports of their creatures or their enemies. And so on the next day Colonel Albert was expected.

Lord Roehampton did not appear till luncheon ; he had received so many boxes from Downing Street which required his attention. ‘ Business will follow one,’ he said ; ‘ yesterday I thought I had baffled it. I do not know what I shall do without my secretaries. I think I shall get you young ladies to assist me.’

‘ You cannot have better secretaries,’ said Mr. Neuchatel ; ‘ Miss Ferrars often helps me.’

Then what was to be done after luncheon ? Would he ride, or would he drive ? And where should they drive and ride to ? But Lord Roehampton did not much care to drive, and was tired of riding. He would rather walk and ramble about Hainault. He wanted

to see the place, and the forest and the fern, and perhaps hear one of those nightingales that they had talked of in Portland Place. But Mrs. Neuchatel did not care to walk, and Mr. Neuchatel, though it was a holiday in the City, had a great many letters to write, and so somehow or other it ended in Lord Roehampton and the two young ladies walking out together, and remaining so long and so late, that Mrs. Neuchatel absolutely contemplated postponing the dinner hour.

‘We shall just be in time, dear Mrs. Neuchatel,’ said Myra; ‘Lord Roehampton has gone up to his room. We have heard a nightingale, and Lord Roehampton insisted upon our sitting on the trunk of a tree till it ceased—and it never ceased.’

Colonel Albert, who had arrived, was presented to Lord Roehampton before dinner. Lord Roehampton received him with stately courtesy. As Myra watched, not without interest, the proceeding, she could scarcely believe, as she marked the lofty grace and somewhat haughty mien of Lord Roehampton, that it could be the same being of frolic and

fancy, and even tender sentiment, with whom she had been passing the preceding hours.

Colonel Albert sate next to Myra at dinner, and Lord Roehampton between Mrs. Neuchatel and her daughter. His manner was different to-day, not less pleased and pleasing, but certainly more restrained. He encouraged Mrs. Neuchatel to occupy the chief part in conversation, and whispered to Adriana, who became somewhat uneasy ; but the whispers mainly consisted of his delight in their morning adventures. When he remarked that it was one of the most agreeable days of his life, she became a little alarmed. Then he addressed Colonel Albert across the table, and said that he had heard from Mr. Neuchatel, that the colonel had been in America, and asked some questions about public men, which brought him out. Colonel Albert answered with gentleness and modesty, never at any length, but in language which indicated, on all the matters referred to, thought and discrimination.

‘I suppose their society is like the best society in Manchester?’ said Lord Roehampton.

It varies in different cities,' said Colonel Albert. 'In some there is considerable culture, and then refinement of life always follows.'

'Yes, but whatever they may be, they will always be colonial. What is colonial necessarily lacks originality. A country that borrows its language, its laws, and its religion, cannot have its inventive powers much developed. They got civilised very soon, but their civilisation was second-hand.'

'Perhaps their inventive powers may develop themselves in other ways,' said the prince. 'A nation has a fixed quantity of invention, and it will make itself felt.'

'At present,' said Lord Roehampton, 'the Americans, I think, employ their invention in imaginary boundary lines. They are giving us plenty of trouble now about Maine.'

After dinner, they had some music; Lord Roehampton would not play whist. He insisted on comparing the voices of his companions with that of the nightingale of the morning. He talked a great deal to Adriana, and Colonel Albert, in the course of the evening much to Myra, and about her brother.

Lord Roehampton more than once had wished to tell her, as he had already told Miss Neuchatel, how delightful had been their morning ; but on every occasion he had found her engaged with the colonel.

‘ I rather like your prince,’ he had observed to Mr. Neuchatel, as they came from the dining-room. ‘ He never speaks without thinking ; very reserved, I apprehend. They say, an inveterate conspirator.’

‘ He has had enough of that,’ said Mr. Neuchatel. ‘ I believe he wants to be quiet.’

‘ That class of man is never quiet,’ said Lord Roehampton.

‘ But what can he do ? ’ said Mr. Neuchatel.

‘ What can he not do ? Half Europe is in a state of chronic conspiracy.’

‘ You must keep us right, my dear lord. So long as you are in Downing Street I shall sleep at nights.’

‘ Miss Ferrars,’ said Lord Roehampton abruptly to Mr. Neuchatel, ‘ must have been the daughter of William Ferrars, one of my great friends in old days. I never knew it till

to-day, and she did not tell me, but it flashed across me from something she said.'

'Yes, she is his daughter, and is in mourning for him at this moment. She has had sorrows,' said Mr. Neuchatel. 'I hope they have ceased. It was one of the happiest days of my life when she entered this family.'

'Ah!' said Lord Roehampton.

The next day, after they had examined the famous stud and stables, there was a riding party, and in the evening Colonel Albert offered to perform some American conjuring tricks, of which he had been speaking in the course of the day. This was a most wonderful performance, and surprised and highly amused everybody. Colonel Albert was the last person who they expected would achieve such marvels; he was so quiet, not to say grave. They could hardly credit that he was the same person as he poured floods of flowers over Myra from her own borrowed pocket-handkerchief, and, without the slightest effort or embarrassment, robbed Lord Roehampton of his watch, and deposited it in Adriana's

bosom. It was evident that he was a complete master of sleight of hand.

‘Characteristic!’ murmured Lord Roehampton to himself.

It was the day after this, that Myra being in the music room and alone, Lord Roehampton opened the door, looked in, and then said, ‘Where is Miss Neuchatel?’

‘I think she is on the terrace.’

‘Let us try to find her, and have one of our pleasant strolls. I sadly want one, for I have been working very hard all this morning, and half the night.’

‘I will be with you, Lord Roehampton, in a moment.’

‘Do not let us have anybody else,’ he said, as she left the room.

They were soon on the terrace, but Adriana was not there.

‘We must find her,’ said Lord Roehampton; ‘you know her haunts. Ah! what a delight it is to be in this air and this scene after those dreadful boxes! I wish they would turn us out. I think they must soon.’

‘Now for the first time,’ said Myra, ‘Lord Roehampton is not sincere.’

‘Then you think me always sincere?’ he replied.

‘I have no reason to think you otherwise.’

‘That is very true,’ said Lord Roehampton, ‘truer perhaps than you imagine.’ Then rather abruptly he said, ‘You know Colonel Albert very well?’

‘Pretty well. I have seen him here frequently, and he is also a friend of my brother.’

‘Ah! a friend of your brother.’ Then, after a slight pause, he said, ‘He is an interesting man.’

‘I think so,’ said Myra. ‘You know all about him, of course.’

‘Very good-looking.’

‘Well, he looks unhappy, I think, and worn.’

‘One is never worn when one is young,’ said Lord Roehampton.

‘He must have great anxieties and great sorrows,’ said Myra. ‘I cannot imagine a position more unfortunate than that of an exiled prince.’

‘I can,’ said Lord Roehampton. ‘To have the feelings of youth and the frame of age.’

Myra was silent, one might say dumb-founded. She had just screwed herself up to the task which Mr. Neuchatel had imposed on her, and was about to appeal to the good offices of Lord Roehampton in favour of the prince, when he had indulged in a remark which was not only somewhat strange, but from the manner in which it was introduced hardly harmonised with her purpose.

‘Yes, I would give up everything,’ said Lord Roehampton. ‘I would even be an exile to be young; to hear that Miss Ferrars deems me interesting and good-looking, though worn.’

‘What is going to happen?’ thought Myra. ‘Will the earth open to receive me!’

‘You are silent,’ said Lord Roehampton. ‘You will not speak, you will not sigh, you will not give a glance of consolation or even pity. But I have spoken too much not to say more. Beautiful, fascinating being, let me at least tell you of my love.’

Myra could not speak, but put her left hand to her face. Gently taking her other hand, Lord Roehampton pressed it to his lips. 'From the first moment I met you, my heart was yours. It was love at first sight; indeed I believe in no other. I was amused with the projects of my friend, and I availed myself of them, but not unfairly. No one can accuse me of trifling with the affections of your sweet friend, and I must do her the justice to say that she did everything to convince me that she shrank from my attentions. But her society was an excuse to enjoy yours. I was an habitual visitor in town that I might cherish my love, and, dare I say it, I came down here to declare it. Do not despise it, dearest of women; it is not worthy of you, but it is not altogether undeserving. It is, as you kindly believed it,—it is sincere!'

CHAPTER IX.

ON the following day, Mr. Neuchatel had good-naturedly invited Endymion down to Hainault, and when he arrived there, a servant informed him that Miss Ferrars wished to see him in her room.

It was a long interview and an agitated one, and when she had told her tale, and her brother had embraced her, she sat for a time in silence, holding his hand, and intimating, that, for a while, she wished that neither of them should speak. Suddenly, she resumed, and said, 'Now you know all, dear darling; it is so sudden, and so strange, that you must be almost as much astounded as gratified. What I have sighed for, and prayed for—what, in moments of inspiration, I have sometimes foreseen—has happened. Our degradation is over. I seem to breathe for the first time for

many years. I see a career, ay, and a great one; and what is far more important, I see a career for you.'

'At this moment, dear Myra, think only of yourself.'

'You are myself,' she replied, rather quickly, 'never more so than at ~~this~~ moment;' and then she said in a tone more subdued, and even tender, 'Lord Roehampton has every quality and every accident of life that I delight in; he has intellect, eloquence, courage, great station and power; and, what I ought perhaps more to consider, though I do not, a sweet disposition and a tender heart. There is every reason why we should be happy—yes, very happy. I am sure I shall sympathise with him; perhaps, I may aid him; at least, he ~~thinks~~ so. He is the noblest of men. The world will talk of the disparity of our years, but Lord Roehampton says that he is really the younger of the two, and I think he is right. My pride, my intense pride, never permitted me any levity of heart.'

'And when is it to happen?' inquired Endymion.

‘Not immediately. I could not marry till a year had elapsed after our great sorrow ; and it is more agreeable, even to him, that our union should be delayed till the session is over. He wants to leave England ; go abroad ; have a real holiday. He has always had a dream of travelling in Spain ; well, we are to realise the dream. If we could get off at the end of July, we might go to Paris, and then to Madrid, and travel in Andalusia in the autumn, and then catch the packet at Gibraltar, and get home just in time for the November cabinets.’

‘Dear Myra ! how wonderful it all seems !’ involuntarily exclaimed Endymion.

‘Yes, but more wonderful things will happen. We have now got a lever to move the world. ‘Understand, my dear Endymion, that nothing is to be announced at present. It will be known only to this family, and the Penruddocks. I am bound to tell them, even immediately ; they are friends that never can be forgotten. I have always kept my correspondence up with Mrs. Penruddock. Besides, I shall tell her in confidence, and she is per-

fectly to be depended on. I am going to ask my lord to let Mr. Penruddock marry us.'

'Oh! that will be capital,' said Endymion.

'There is another person, by the bye, who must know it, at least my lord says so,' said Myra, 'and that is Lady Montfort; you have heard of that lady and her plans. Well, she must be told—at least, sooner or later. She will be annoyed, and she will hate me. I cannot help it; everyone is hated by somebody.'

During the three months that had to elapse before the happy day, several incidents occurred that ought to be noted. In the first place, Lady Montfort, though disappointed and very much astonished, bore the communication from Lord Roehampton more kindly than he had anticipated. Lord Roehampton made it by letter, and his letters to women were more happy even than his despatches to ministers, and they were unrivalled. He put the matter in the most skilful form. Myra had been born in a social position not inferior to his own, and was the daughter of one of his early political friends. He did not dilate too much on her charms and captivating qualities, but

sufficiently for the dignity of her who was to become his wife. And then he confessed to Lady Montfort how completely his heart and happiness were set on Lady Roehampton being welcomed becomingly by his friends ; he was well aware, that in these matters things did not always proceed as one could wish, but this was the moment, and this the occasion, to test a friend, and he believed he had the dearest, the most faithful, the most fascinating, and the most powerful in Lady Montfort.

‘ Well, we must put the best face upon it,’ exclaimed that lady ; ‘ he was always romantic. But, as he says, or thinks, what is the use of friends if they do not help you in a scrape? ’

So Lady Montfort made the acquaintance of Myra, and welcomed her new acquaintance cordially. She was too fine a judge of beauty and deportment not to appreciate them, even when a little prejudice lurked behind. She was amused also, and a little gratified, by being in the secret ; presented Myra with a rare jewel, and declared that she should attend the wedding ; though when the day arrived, she

was at Princedown, and could not unfortunately leave her lord.

About the end of June, a rather remarkable paragraph appeared in the journal of society :
‘ We understand that His Royal Highness Prince Florestan, who has been for some little time in this country, has taken the mansion in Carlton Gardens, recently occupied by the Marquis of Katterfelto. The mansion is undergoing very considerable repairs, but it is calculated that it will be completed in time for the reception of His Royal Highness by the end of the autumn ; His Royal Highness has taken the extensive moors of Dinnie-whiskie for the coming season.’

In the earlier part of July, the approaching alliance of the Earl of Roehampton with Miss Ferrars, the only daughter of the late Right Honourable William Pitt Ferrars, of Hurstley Hall, in the county of Berks, was announced, and great was the sensation, and innumerable the presents instantly ordered.

But on no one did the announcement produce a greater effect than on Zenobia ; that the daughter of her dearest friend should make

so interesting and so distinguished an alliance was naturally most gratifying to her. She wrote to Myra a most impassioned letter, as if they had only separated yesterday, and a still longer and more fervent one to Lord Roehampton; Zenobia and he had been close friends in other days, till he wickedly changed his politics, and was always in office and Zenobia always out. This was never to be forgiven. But the bright lady forgot all this now, and sent to Myra the most wondrous bracelet of precious stones, in which the word 'Souvenir' was represented in brilliants, rubies, and emeralds.

'For my part,' said Myra to Endymion, 'my most difficult task are the bridesmaids. I am to have so many, and know so few. I feel like a recruiting sergeant. I began with Adriana, but my lord helps me very much out of his family, and says, when we have had a few family dinners, all will be right.'

Endymion did not receive the banter he expected at the office. The event was too great for a jest. Seymour Hicks, with a serious countenance, said Ferrars might get

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